

## WABC's Need to Know

### Week of February 25, 2019

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#### In the Legislature:

It's another very busy week in the Legislature, with bills with a *fiscal impact* needing to be out of committee by this Friday, March 1st. And last Friday was the deadline for policy bills to be voted out of committee. Below is the status of important asset-building related legislation:

◆ **ACTION NEEDED! Children's Educational Savings Accounts heard in both House & Senate** ([SHB 1592](#) and [SSB 5704](#))

These two bills would establish Children's Educational Savings Accounts for all Washington kindergarteners in a public school who qualify for free or reduced lunch. The accounts would be seeded with an initial \$100, and could be used for higher education purposes (tuition, books, etc.).

**Status:** *As of today, neither of these bills has been scheduled for a hearing in their fiscal committees this week. Both bills are subject to the March 1<sup>st</sup> cut-off. Your help is needed! Please take a minute and provide an online comment on these bills, stressing how important they are for your work:*

Online Comment on HB 1592: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/psc/bill//1592>

Online Comment on SB 5704: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/psc/bill//5704>

◆ **Providing Student Loan Debt Relief** ([SB 5774](#))

This bill, introduced by Senator Lias (who has been a longtime champion on student loan debt relief issues), would establish a student loan refinancing program, and would put in place borrower protections, among of things.

**Status:** SB 5774 is scheduled to be heard in Senate Ways & Means on 2/28 at 1:30pm. If this is an issue important to you & your network, **please send a brief note to [Senator Rolfes](#) and ask her to vote this bill out of committee this week.**

◆ **Need to pass this week: Eliminating Zombie Debt** ([HB 1730](#))

Representative Whalen recently introduced this bill to end the practice of "zombie debt", which re-starts the statute of limitations when a consumer unwittingly responds affirmatively to a collector regarding the debt.

**Status:** HB 1730 passed out of the House Committee on Civil Rights & the Judiciary on 2/20, and is now in the Rules Committee, where it needs to pass so that it becomes eligible for a vote by the full House.

◆ **Great progress in the House: Ending deceptive “Pocket Service” debt collection practices** ([HB 1066](#) / [SB 5034](#))

This legislation, requested by the Attorney General, ends the current practice which allows debt collectors to serve a person with a lawsuit for an outstanding debt without filing suit in court. As a result, folks are prevented from verifying the suit is real, because when they call the court about the summons, the court has no actual record of it. This has led to people assuming the summons isn't legitimate, and therefore failing to respond. As a result, debt collectors are able to obtain default judgments, leading to bank account and wage garnishments as well as property liens.

**Status:** HB 1066 has already passed the full House. It was scheduled for hearing in Senate Law & Justice Committee this morning, 2/25. Stay tuned for an update shortly. SB 5034 is currently in the Senate Rules Committee, where it needs to pass in order to come up for a vote before the full Senate.

**BONUS:** Check out this [great segment by KIRO TV's Jesse Jones on Pocket Service Debt](#)

◆ **Updating Standards of Need for Economic Assistance (TANF) Programs** ([HB 1603](#) & [SB 5684](#))

This bill makes changes to the eligibility requirements of TANF recipients, including eliminating the mandatory orientation requirement, making revisions to the requirement that TANF recipients must seek work, and exempting certain households from the five-year eligibility requirements due to hardships. It also directs DSHS to update its comprehensive living costs analysis.

**Status:** SB 5684, the companion measure, is scheduled for a hearing in Senate Ways & Means on 2/26 at 1:30pm. HB 1603 passed the House Human Services & Early Committee on 2/5 and is currently in Appropriations.

◆ **Progress! Lowering interest on consumer debt** ([SHB 1602](#))

Representative Reeves bill would reduce the statutory interest rate on all consumer from 12% to the federal reserve rate plus two percent; additionally, it would and lower the amount of wages that can be garnished on all consumer debt.

**Status:** HB 1602 passed the House Committee on Civil Rights & the Judiciary, and is now in House Rules, where it needs to pass so that it becomes eligible for a vote by the full House.

◆ **Progress! Regulating medical debt collection** ([SHB 1531](#))

Legislation to drastically curb abuses in medical debt collection has been introduced by Representative Jinkins. This bill would heavily restrict prejudgment interest, reduce post-judgment interest and the amount of wages that can be garnished, as well as require information about charity care, prohibit collection if a charity care application is pending, and eliminate bench warrants for medical debt, among other provisions.

**Status:** SHB 1531 was voted out of the House Committee on Civil Rights and the Judiciary and is House Rules, where it needs to pass so that it becomes eligible for a vote by the full House. *Note: the Senate version of this bill, SB 5520, is not expected to advance any further.*

◆ **Expanding and Funding the Working Families Tax Credit ([HB 1527](#) and [SB 5810](#))**

This legislation would allow low and moderate income families to receive a credit on their sales tax paid to state and local governments. This is a much-needed source of funding for low-income earners, similar to the federal EITC, which could provide economic relief to thousands of working families struggling to make ends meet.

**Status:** SB 5810 was heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on 2/21. HB 1527 is currently in the House Finance Committee. Both bills are expected to be part of the larger budget negotiations.

◆ **New votes scheduled this week! Expanding property tax exemptions for veterans, disabled persons and seniors ([HB 1181](#) & [SB 5160](#))**

This bill raises the income thresholds for property tax exemptions for veterans, disabled persons and seniors. This critical legislation would help to counter rising housing costs and assist vulnerable populations in staying in their primary residences.

**Status:** SB 5160 is scheduled for a vote in Senate Ways & Means on 2/25 (the previously scheduled votes did not happen). HB 1181 is scheduled for a vote by the House Finance Committee on 2/27.

### Events & Trainings:

◆ **Seminar to Learn about AARP Foundation's New Resource, "MySavingsJar"**

The AARP Foundation has created "MySavingsJar", an online resource to help working adults kick-start a savings habit and move from financial stress to financial freedom. This new self-help tool offers participants practical know-how and community support to build financial confidence over time and on any personal device, including a smartphone, tablet, laptop computer, etc.

**Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am - Noon**

NW Access Fund, 1437 S Jackson St, Seattle, WA 98144

**There is no fee to participate, but please [register](#) in advance.**

**Note:** *We'll post more information about similar seminars across Washington as soon as we have it.*

◆ **FICO Hosts New Monthly Webinars on FICO® Open Access for Credit & Financial Counseling**  
**Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am**

FICO is now offering 30-minute informational webinars on FICO® Score Open Access for C&FC. This program offers nonprofits the opportunity to share the FICO® Score with clients. Those interested in learning more can call in to listen and also ask questions. The webinars will take place monthly on the same date and time, beginning February 27<sup>th</sup>. More information about the webinars can be found [here](#).

◆ **Webinar: Leveraging the Promise of a Brighter Future with CSA Investments**

This webinar is a great resource for finding out where you can leverage existing private and/or public investments for CSA's in your community, or consider developing new programs.

**Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00a.m., PST**

Click [here](#) to register!

◆ **If you're in the South Puget Sound Region: Financial Coaching Clinic**

The Lower Columbia CAP and The Prosperity Agenda have teamed up to offer a financial coaching clinic:

**March 5-7, 2019 from 9:30 – 11:30am**

Financial Independence Center, 1526 Commerce Ave, Longview, WA

Cost: \$625.00 per person, coaching certification upon completion

**Reserve your spot now by calling 360-425-3430 x 215 or email Liz Mynnti**

@ [lizm@lowercolumbiacap.org](mailto:lizm@lowercolumbiacap.org)

◆ **FREE Student Loan Counseling Workshop in Tacoma**

**March 9, 2019 from 1:30 – 3:30pm**

Tacoma Public Library, 215 S. 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma, WA 98408

This free event is hosted by the Student Loan Workgroup, convened by the Washington Attorney General's office. For more information, please contact Tony Leahy at

[tony@centsprogram.org](mailto:tony@centsprogram.org)

◆ **New Date! Investing in Women, Investing in our Economy: Advancing Gender Wealth Equity**

The Asset Funders Network invites you to a workshop to discuss the dimensions of gender wealth divides, what they are and why they matter. This discussion will activate opportunities to help close wealth divides by digging into the details of recently enacted legislation as well as current proposals moving forward. The event features Amy Castro Baker, author of "*On Shaky Ground: Stabilizing the Financial Security of Single Women*"

**March 22, 2019 from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

El Centro de la Raza, **2524 16th Avenue S, Seattle, Washington 98144**

**Check out the background information and [sign up to attend](#)**

## Resources & Tools:

- ◆ [Great article](#) by our partners, the Credit Builders Alliance about how reporting on-time rent payments provide an opportunity to increase credit scores.

◆ **New Report: Addressing the Financial Health of Low- to Moderate-Income Americans**

[The report](#), conducted by the Center for Financial Services Innovation and AARP Foundation finds that of 50 million Americans over 50, 83% report financial stress, including a lack of savings, unmanageable debt, inadequate protection from medical shocks, an inability to retire and family obligations. The report outlines several opportunities for dealing with these significant challenges.

◆ **On-Line Financial Education presented by State Treasurer's Office**

The Washington State Treasurer's Office has partnered by Everfi to create on-line financial education modules. These are FREE, easy to access modules covering topics such as Money Basics, Loans & Payments, Paying for College and Retirement savings. You can access these modules here: [State Treasurer's Financial Education Tools](#)

- ◆ **Financial Coaching Pilot Program for micro- and small-business owners:** [American Financial Solutions](#) will begin a pilot program for micro and small business owners (SBO). The goal of their Small Business Owner (SBO) program is to provide financial coaching and counseling to help owners be successful and confident in growing and maintaining their businesses. Coaching aids owners in assessing growth readiness and areas of potential improvement. Additionally, the program offers the tools to help SBOs develop the financial management skills necessary for a successful business.

**Contact Becky House 888-282-5949 ext. 1114 for more information.**